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Postmodernism

C20 Society, The Gallery, Cowcross Street, 2 March 2017

Timothy Brittain-Catlin

Well, now, this lecture about postmodernism is going to be the joker in the pack of the series. That's because to some extent whether or not something is postmodern is sometimes a matter of your opinion, and also because there is a view that all buildings are postmodern nowadays anyway. There's only going to be a single architect here who explicitly describes himself as a 'postmodernist'. But what we are going to do here is to look at a series of buildings, mostly from the 1980s and 90s, which are usually described as being postmodern and see what they have in common. And what I've discovered in doing the research for this talk and in talking to several of the architects concerned is that even 1980s postmodernism is not really what we often thought it was.

The building you can see here – **Clifton Nurseries** in the Covent Garden Piazza, designed towards the end of 1980 by Terry Farrell, was probably the most significant single piece of postmodern architecture in Britain. It was built for Lord Rothschild, whom Farrell had met through Charles and Maggie Jencks. The critic Martin Pawley described it when it was built as the 'Barcelona Pavilion' of postmodernism, and ten years later he reasserted that opinion and added that like the famous Mies building, it would probably eventually be rebuilt. It certainly made a tremendous stir, because it didn't seem to play by the rules of the architecture that we were being taught at the time. It was brightly coloured and covered in detailing that seemed to be playing around with the bits of classical architecture that people enjoy most. When Farrell wrote to Lord Rothschild with his idea, he told his client that 'a classical revivalism called 'Post-Modernism' is all the rage with students now', and to prove that he sent him a copy of this – the now legendary Post-Modern Classicism edition of the British magazine ***Architectural Design***.

What you can see from the building on the front, and the names on the back, is that this postmodern classicism was predominantly an American idea. The only British architects here are Jeremy Dixon, who had built some red-brick houses with gables and bay windows in west London, and James Stirling, who at this point was designing large, idiosyncratic, unclassifiable institutional buildings in Germany. The striking image on the cover was that of Michael Graves' Portland Building, something that I as a second-year student was shown I would say pretty much every second week at least by my tutor, who had worked on Graves' Claghorn house extension in Princeton of 1973-74, the one painted different colours to represent the elements and the history of the old house. And it was the precisely the same themes that *Architectural Design* turned to time and time again as you can see from this **selection of covers** from the magazine between 1980 and 1987.

Architectural Design had been around since 1930, but it had been bought in 1975 by the Kensington-based publisher Andreas Papadakis and he spearheaded the classical revival together with the critic Charles Jencks. The technical editor at the time was Ian Latham, now the publishing editor of *Architecture Today*. In time Papadakis, who was described by at

least two of the postmodern architects I spoke to as 'subversive', in a positive sense, published special editions on the work of John Soane and Edwin Lutyens. But 1975 is a significant year for another reason in the history of postmodernism. In October that the Museum of Modern Art in New York opened an exhibition of drawings and models from the Parisian École des Beaux-Arts, something of a landmark as it reminded architects and designers of the attraction and also the value of high-quality architectural drawing.

Now what followed was an episode which was crucial to the development of postmodernism, but it was also extremely American and I think in the long term misleading as far as our own buildings are concerned. We are far enough away from this now to be able to look at it more objectively, and I'm indebted to the young scholar Martin Hartung, who is researching it, for taking me through the principal aspects of it. Essentially what happened between 1975 and 1979 was that high-art American architects, in a period when not much building was going on, looked for opportunities to raise the prestige of their work, even if it wasn't being built. That meant for example exhibiting their drawings – and even their sketches – as if they were what Jonathan Meades might call *art objects*, framed, priced and curated, and to inaugurate a discussion about the importance and the prestige of these drawings to the meaning and practice of architecture; and also to inaugurate a cult around Robert Venturi's book *Complexity and Contradiction*. You can see from the title of the AD called 'The Post-Modern Object' that there is an attempt, rather like that of some early gothic revivalists, to extend architectural ownership – branding – into high prestige designed artefacts. In May 1979, the month in which Mrs Thatcher was elected over here, the Max Protetch Gallery in New York held its first solo exhibition of architects' drawings with a display by Michael Graves, followed by Richard Meier and Aldo Rossi, and in 1982 Venturi and Scott Brown held an exhibition there that was evidently meticulously planned, not only in terms of content and text but also for its invited guests.

The relevance of this to the British scene was further exaggerated when Venturi Scott Brown went to work on the **National Gallery** in Trafalgar Square in 1985 and received a lot of attention for it. There had been, as you won't need reminding, a failed competition in 1982 with a rancid aftermath; the Sainsbury brothers – so memorably described by Alan Powers recently as the Three Grocers of the Apocalypse – then supported a redesign and the appointment of an American firm. The rather crude and chunky-looking building – seen here in a photograph taken for me by Patrick O'Keeffe – was not received particularly favourably by most critics, the circumstances of the appointment were endlessly rehashed, the winding up of their opponents by the interested parties was further aggravated, the whole debate became polarised and it became easy to caricature postmodernism everywhere as a trashy, over-clever, foreign invasion by a series of preachy, annoying people.

That's the end of the history lesson. But it is very clear that the ideas of the early editions of *Architectural Design* are mostly nowhere to be seen in British post-modernism. The closest to it is possibly the large-scale work that Sir Jeremy Dixon and Ed Jones did in the 1980s and 1990s. This is obviously true in the case of their massive Mississauga city hall in Ontario of 1982-1987, which is the most American looking of all British-designed postmodernist buildings. On the site of Clifton Nurseries, Dixon Jones repaired the piazza and designed a block which contains a new entry to the Royal Opera House. For many, these **fine paintings**

by Carl Laubin, one of which appeared on the cover of *AD* and which the artist has kindly let me show you, are as much part of the Dixon Jones scheme as the eventual version that was built. The Laubin paintings elevate the architectural design into a prestigious art-based experience, and they are not easily forgotten. Laubin also produced fabulous paintings with lovely wet pavements for Dixon Jones' **Compass Point** scheme on the Isle of Dogs, of 1985-1988, which when I was a part II student I thought was terrific, but I'm showing you this photograph by French + Tye, from the Modern House website, for a particular reason, and not only that the Modern House photos are likely to become a canonical source of illustrations in the future. The reason is that this stepped, 'Dutch' elevation reminded me strongly of the **terrace I grew up in on Brook Green in Hammersmith**, about which more in a moment. It seemed to me to be astonishing and wonderful, that this type of late Victorian artistic architecture – and I still haven't discovered who the architect was – could reappear like this. And I don't think it is just me who sees reminiscences of old buildings in some postmodern architecture. Here on the left are the houses in **St Mark's Road in W10** which first drew attention to Dixon Jones, and on the right you can see a terrace of Edwardian houses behind them: gables, pitched porches, half timbering, arched windows.

A final point about Dixon Jones is that I note that their staff pose on the practice website with fine white cardboard models, an echo of the American art-object thing I mentioned earlier. But this type of collaboration with an artist is very unusual in British postmodernism. One of the things that makes the Dixon Jones Covent Garden scheme British rather than American is that it is a remodelling and extension of an old building – and this turns out to be a recurring feature. Terry Farrell told me that he increasingly saw architecture as a means to rebuilding towns and cities, and for that reason he sees styles as being transitional – as they were for Asplund, and as they were for the late Charles Moore, the one American postmodernist who is nowadays consistently underrated, maybe because he's not around to go on branding and pushing himself. Terry went through a Scandinavian phase, and a Craig Elwood phase, and if he won't mind me saying it, a kind of David Hockney phase with the Water Treatment Works at Reading. When he was a student he drew detailed measured drawings of eighteenth-century furniture, and in his autobiography of the years up to 1991 he draws attention to three buildings that he saw and that influenced him at the time – Norman Shaw's Cragside, Vanburgh's Seaton Delaval, and the astonishing neo-Greek Doric Belsay Hall, designed by its owner Sir Charles Monck at the beginning of the nineteenth-century. Farrell's office published these drawings of new Georgian looking buildings between **Newgate Street and Paternoster Square** as part of the 1989-1992 masterplan initiated by John Simpson.

In the case of Clifton Nurseries, Terry says that he was thinking about the other classical porticos and pediments in the area: the Royal Opera House itself, the *Taboo*-era Theatre Royal Drury Lane, maybe also, although he didn't mention it, the curiously severe and slightly surreal portico of the Church of Scotland affixed to the smooth front of the Fortune Theatre nearby in Russell Street. And certainly by and large Terry's larger schemes often took elements he liked, not necessarily from the immediate area, and mixed them together to create a mini city, both inside and out. **TV-AM**, which he designed as Clifton Nurseries was going up, created a sensation when it was unveiled in 1982, not only because of the decorative detailing but also because the front was completely different from the back, which would be normal in any city block. Some of the larger projects that followed had very

complicated pieces of city planning in them: that is true of **Alban Gate**, built across London Wall in 1986-1992, and of course of **Embankment Place** above Charing Cross Station, of 1985-1990. Its great curved roof is clearly drawn from that of the major and most memorable railways stations – without trying in a modernist way to pretend that its form is related to its function – and Terry used it for the cover of his 2013 book precisely to make the point about its urban role. Furthermore, although the **Vauxhall Cross** building annoyed modernist critics because they thought it looked like the Graves one in Portland, if you look at it carefully you can easily see that it is quite a different type of building – it is composed of narrow plates of office that create a varied ‘city-type’ edge rather than being a decorated box. I gather that Venturi told Terry that he – Terry – wasn’t a postmodernist but a ‘hybrid’ and I guess what we have there is a sign that the luxury American brand is being protected.

At the **Comyn Ching** triangle at Seven Dials in London, Farrell was able to remodel and redetail an historic piece of London with a loyal client and over a long period of time – from 1978 to 1985 and this project has now been listed after a corner of it was mutilated. What is very striking about it is the fact that not only does the architectural control extend to all scales, but that most people won’t easily work out where the new insertions come, as of course is again the case with any average piece of townscape. It is the opposite of the old SPAB dogma that there must – *must* – be a contrast between old and new. And yet funnily enough the next theme I want to take up is quite how close British postmodernists come to arts and crafts thinking in other respects.

The first piece of evidence I want to show here is this remarkable building, the **Katherine Stephen library for Rare Books** at Newnham College, by van Heyningen and Haward. When this went up in 1981-1982 it was clearly very remarkable, and it is only with the benefit of hindsight that I can begin to understand why. This photograph of it shows it alongside Birkin Haward’s sketches. Josh McCosh, who is a partner at VHH today, told me that what the architects had in mind was the barrel vault that Basil Champneys used first in the old college library in 1896-1898, and indeed earlier in Clough Hall alongside it from ten years earlier. Champney’s relaxed linked buildings not only provide a strong visual identity for the college, they are also very pretty and people like them; the rare books extension was intended to provide more of it. There are other stripy buildings from this period and a little later – the architect Martin Richardson designed stripy housing at Willen Park at Milton Keynes in the mid-1980s, and also drew them in coloured crayon on American detail paper like Michael Graves did.

More architects than you might think show in a most interesting way how the architecture of ‘Sweetness and Light’ – that is, the Queen Anne revival style of the original buildings at Newnham – reappears in British postmodernism. I had a fascinating conversation with John Melvin, who in 1986 wrote in *Architectural Design* on ‘meaning & metaphor in the modern house’ and is the architect of several wonderful buildings for the Mercers’ Company that deserve some further appreciation. He moved into Islington in the 1960s and saw Georgian terraces being pulled down for new developments that not only didn’t respect the street lines but also had no real recognisable features. Regret at what was happening to old city fabric reappears in architects’ reminiscences of this period time and time again, and in fact Martin Hartung told me that it lay behind the rediscovery of old plan drawings in the United States even before the various exhibitions of the 1970s. In 1973-1979 Melvin designed

housing at Penton Street that had some recognisable historical precedent, with arched doorways, parapets with pitched roofs behind them, and front walls straight onto the pavement. For this he won a Civic Trust commendation in 1979. Then in 1985 he designed this staff accommodation for **St Paul's Girls' School**, a Mercers' Company foundation, in Brook Green, after one of the Mercers' staff had seen the Penton Street houses. He told me that he had been struck by the architecture of the original school buildings down the road, designed by **Gerard Horsley in 1904-7**; apart from the formal, symmetrical form, and the red brick – the stone dressing replaced with white paint, of course – the barrel vault form of the school hall is suggested by the dormer. Other buildings in the immediate area are the exact contemporary Carnegie central library, by Henry T. Hare, another leading exponent of Free Style baroque, and the very fine LCC Fire Station of 1913; the 1938 police station by McMorran and Whitby possibly also added something to the mix. I suspect another element is the architecture of the old police station of 1903, by John Dixon Butler of 1903, with its smart red brick and stone string courses in **Blackstock Road** in Islington and which the Victorian Society is now trying to save.

In 1992, John completed for the Mercers' Company this remarkable block of sheltered housing in **Essex Road** in Highbury. You can see here not only the Edwardian influences from Brook Green and Hammersmith but also, so John says, earlier work, for example by Norman Shaw at Albert Mansions and elsewhere. He said that here he wanted to emphasise everything that was missing in the post-War block – by eminent modernist architects that the C20 Society exists to support, of course – on the other side of the road from 1966-1976. That meant doors, chimneys, railings, stairlights, stone dressings and lots of red brick. These were, he said, the elements that spelled 'house', just as they had been for Dixon Jones at St Mark's Road. This is the **doctors' surgery** around the corner which has a fairly explicit reference to St Paul's School in it. He won a series of prizes for this building, including the Royal Fine Art Commission Building of the Year, and the brickwork award of the Worshipful Company of Tilers and Bricklayers.

But he also told me something that in retrospect makes perfect sense. He said that his most influential teacher at the Architectural Association in the 1950s had been his second-year tutor, the architect-planner Elizabeth Chesterton, who had made him aware of the value and importance of the historic fabric of old towns, and indeed the primacy of planning in getting the design of a new building right.

A little later, in 1964, Chesterton published her proposals for the centre of King's Lynn which now look like something of a watershed in postwar planning. She told the town to respect its historic memories, and to preserve the waterfront warehouses; she also suggested infilling them where new buildings, even important civic ones, were required, and that the colours, textures, and materials of the buildings, their heights and building lines, and the quality of their workmanship should be respected. What you can see here is the result: the **new law courts**, designed by Ian Baker of Leonard Manasseh & Partners and completed in 1981. There is more of this going on than you might have thought – Leonard Manasseh talked a lot about the detailing of vernacular architecture and here for example is his Master Builders' Hotel at **Bucklers Hard**, built as part of the overall National Motor Museum scheme for Lord Montagu. He told one journalist that 'there could be no higher praise' when someone told him that this building looked as if it had always been there. And this,

remember, is a building designed by a high-art modernist architect from the AA working in tandem with a state-of-the-art modernist planner. The detailing of the edges of the gables and the proportions of the windows are not accidental.

This quayside photograph was taken by the much-missed Martin Charles, who incidentally also took the photos you have just seen of the buildings by Van Heyningen and Haward and of John Melvin, and this link may not be a coincidence. Martin was exceptionally aware of the physical qualities of buildings and his clear, sharp photographs emphasise them; he moved very happily into digital photography and indeed into Photoshop. He told me once that what he really wanted to do was produce a series of photographs of mid and late Victorian warehouses – he liked their grainy, rough feel. Martin's final projects included fabulous photography for books on Ernest George, Norman Shaw – for Andrew Saint's new edition of 2010, and Philip Webb – all richly textured buildings, and ones which in John Melvin's words were 'wearing so well'. So I suspect that time will show that he played as much a part in the imagery of British postmodernism as Andreas Papadakis did for the American and international versions.

From here I can very smoothly move on to Richard Reid's **Epping Forest Civic Offices**, which were won in competition with partners in 1984 and completed under his own name in 1990. Here the idea behind the design was to respond to the two towers that were already symbols of the town – the magnificent church tower by Bodley, of 1905-07 and the watertower of the late 1870s further along the High Street. Indeed when the winning project was described in the *AJ* in December 1984, the article recorded that 'the whole ensemble is conceived as an extension and enrichment of the English vernacular tradition', and a later article after the building's completion by Trevor Garnham – the historian of W.R. Lethaby – referred back to Reid's analytical drawings that demonstrated the structure of the village. He remembered an article that Reid had written in 1981 called 'Architecture and the Vernacular' and in particular to the Lethaby idea that traditions are a product of time and repeated work. Reid drew the scheme **in the popular postmodern way**, as a bird's eye axonometric, so the references to contemporary Americans are clear. But the emphasis on the late Victorian buildings in the area and the fact that the project incorporates earlier buildings clearly make this one a canonical piece of British postmodernism. Incidentally, Reid was like John Melvin a Rome Scholar, and I was very struck when I spoke to him by his emphasis on Italy and the central importance of Ruskin, of the savage and of changefulness, and of drawing and sketching from historical buildings in his work, and also the influence on him of post-War Italian architecture too. When I put it to him that he might be a postmodernist, Richard told me that he saw himself as 'restructuring the modern', which in one form or another seems to be a recurring theme among his generation.

One of the assessors for the Epping Forest competition was Piers Gough, which brings me to the only architect I spoke to who described himself as a postmodernist – in fact he told me that when he heard the word, he wanted to make sure that he was associated with it. Gough originally started up in practice as a year-out student in 1968, and in his final year, after returning to the AA, he was taught by Peter Cook. He said that his intention in his buildings was to take pleasure from the world around him, and that he would identify most specifically with the Pop Art movement – not necessary of Roy Liechtenstein but of, say, Allen Jones. Ten years after John Outram and John Melvin had been students, and before

Alvin Boyarsky became head of it in 1971, the AA was still largely scientific and rationalising in its teaching; that at least, Gough says, meant that however much he wanted to provoke the modernist *Architectural Review*, he knew that he had to justify rationally any type of proposal he made.

Gough made his name as the designer of the exhibition held from the end of 1981 to celebrate the Edwardian architect **Edwin Lutyens**, led by an extraordinarily distinguished mixture of critics and historians, and that event is often seen the turning point in British postmodernism. What he wanted to do – perhaps especially within the brutalist walls of the Hayward Gallery – was not to provide the conventionally sterile gallery-type atmosphere in which to appreciate drawings as objects, which Lutyens himself had disapproved of, but to evoke for a new audience something of the atmosphere of Lutyens' buildings: you can see here for example in this photograph by Morley von Sternberg the gloss black paint which Lutyens liked to use. Gough told me that he thought that the Edwardian period was 'the high point of architectural ability in this country' and pointed out the way in which Edwardian architects would do something different with the windows on every floor.

During the course of the 1980s, Gough's practice, CZWG, established itself as the best known of the British explicit postmodernists. **Janet Street-Porter's house**, around the corner from here, photographed by Tim Street-Porter, was completed in 1987: the year before, the client was reported in the *AJ* as saying 'I don't want anyone to like this house', which probably meant that young architects quickly turned up to see it. In 1988, Gough's partner Rex Wilkinson completed **Cascades** on Westferry Road in the Isle of Dogs – which when it was built stood alone in a large still-empty or low-level landscape, while Gough designed **China Wharf**, named after China, the client's late cat, in Bermondsey, which you see here in photographs by Jo Reid and John Peck. It is hard to remember it now, but these buildings were very different from every other building going up and did indeed evoke the fun and pleasure that the architects had striven for as students, which of course is not the same as saying that there is anything unconsidered about them; in fact Gough is envious of Lutyens' extreme control of detailing. Where the idea of context comes into China Wharf is in Gough's idea that the colourful splashes across the front of it evoke the wharfside life of the River's previous incarnation. There is an obvious reason why these striking buildings remained in the public consciousness for a long time afterwards – in 1990 they appeared on the front of the **BT London telephone directories**. The final building in that first set of buildings is the **Circle** in Bermondsey, with these deep blue glazed bricks, also photographed by Jo Reid and John Peck, which Gough said he chose because they were the nicest colour in the Shaws of Derwen catalogue, but also because they were as he put it to me 'landscapy' – the sea, the sky. These projects were carried out for a commercial developer – the kind of person that critics in the decade before had thought was beyond the pale – and they again testify to the fact that there wasn't anything irrational about the designer process.

In 1993 CZWG completed these **public lavatories**, photographed by Chris Gascoigne, on Westbourne Grove: the client, who subsidised their construction, was John Scott, the well-known Victorian collector who had been an early and significant client for Farrell + Grimshaw, and who I think will turn out to be a significant figure in the long-term history of postmodernism. There has always been a sheerly decorative stream in English design that you have probably come across already when looking at the neo-Georgians. Some of these

designers are yet to make it into the mainstream of architectural history and criticism. **Doris Zinkeisen** drew these set designs for a play called *The High Toby* by J.B. Priestley, for Pollock's Toy Theatres in 1948 – the view from the country house and the pretty English village street look to me like the kind of idealised views that many people grew up with and enjoyed seeing. It was, and was intended to be, an upper-class style. There was a great deal more of this sort of thing – for example in the design and graphics of Fortnum & Mason in the 1950s and 1960s; **Oliver Messel** designed well publicised interiors like this, at the Dorchester Hotel in 1953; for the wine merchant Justerini & Brookes in Bond Street in 1954; and this one, H&M Rayne, described as the loveliest shoe shop in the world, at 15-16 Old Bond Street in 1959. I imagine it is lurking in the background of some designers' minds more than they might admit or think. And that's where I am going to introduce **John Outram**, whose work appears at first sight to be quite unlike any of that of the other architects I am mentioning today.

I think it takes a reasonable awareness of the importance of the history of ornament to be able to look properly at the work of John Outram. I mentioned the Lutyens exhibition in relation to Piers Gough; Outram was the designer of Clive Wainwright and Paul Atterbury's 'Pugin: A Gothic Passion' exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1994, an event which possibly left a longer trail, and with which John Scott, whom I mentioned earlier, was much involved. As with Pugin's richest churches, and indeed the public areas of the Palace of Westminster, every inch of Outram's work can be decorated in forms that he had to devise on the basis of his researches. When I was a student Outram started using Blitzcrete, which was a form of decorative concrete that incorporated blocks of bright colours, named after the fact that something similar appeared after the blitz, made up from random rubble. Outram described its use as was part of the 'Iconic Engineering of the Conceptual Environment', and said that it can be used to embody any number of different ideas that relate to its materials and its making up – wet, dry, fiery, broken, pulverised, and so on. Architecture was, he said, more than plumbing or anatomy; its elements have meanings and uses which can form languages of their own. This is for him the purpose of building.

That doesn't sound much like the sort of historical references I've mentioned so far, but in fact it is not as far off as you might think. Outram told me that the books that interested him were ones about language and semiotics, that is, the study of the meanings of signs – he mentioned Saussure and Chomsky – but particularly about ethnography of which he read a great deal. At the Central London Polytechnic where he started his training in 1955 he was greeted with the announcement that 'Architecture is no longer a literary medium', and that accordingly there was to be no reading list. The AA later was hardly any better. He said – as did his AA contemporary John Melvin – that the idea that architecture was anything but a practical science was considered ridiculous; and he quoted Alison Smithson as saying 'now we collect catalogues' – possibly a reference to the Smithson's well known essay 'But today we collect ads'. What Outram wanted to do instead was to invent a universal set of ground rules. This is not at all unprecedented in English mainstream architecture, and you only have to go back yet again to the late Victorian period to see it clearly in the history writing of W.R. Lethaby. Lethaby's *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* of 1891, which many arts and crafts architects read. This book explored the way in which the cosmos was symbolised through building, and showed how their ancient designers delved into cosmic symbols – stars, eggs, trees, and so on – to create comprehensible pictorial languages. And this is very

close to where Outram stands – he is thus another late Victorian, or Edwardian, amongst British postmodernist architects. Unlike Graves' Claghorn house, Outram does this through decorative detailing as well as construction. He maintains a series of very interesting and thoughtful websites which describe in detail how his ideas, his designs and his languages evolve.

The image here is of **Duncan Hall at Rice University** of 1993-1997, and Outram said of it that here he had finally 'realised his impossible dream' and had managed to achieve everything he had striven for up to then. It was also very popular with the public, rather proving a Lethaby point, and also with the critic Robert Maxwell who, Outram believes, understands the significance of his achievement. Outram was well known in Britain mainly for the design of a villa called Wadhurst Park in Sussex, where Blitzcrete was developed into new Orders and forms, but some of his smaller projects are important too and they all need protecting. **Harp Heating**, at Swanley in Kent, of 1985, has already gone – Outram sent me these two interesting before and after pictures of it, together with his diagram; he also told me that he had written a novel at the time Harp was being designed, about passing certain architectural figures – entablatures, hypostyles, and so on – though different landscapes. **The Isle of Dogs Storm Water Pumping Station** of 1986, commissioned alongside others by Rogers and Grimshaw, is probably safe for the time being. This is **Sphinx Hill**, the Egyptian House in Oxfordshire, completed in 1999. But of course the British project which assures Outram's long term reputation is the **Judge Institute of Management Studies**, in Cambridge, of 1990-1996: these photographs are by Edward Powe. In his long website commentary on it, Outram says that it should be thought of as a fragment of some giant Metropolis unaccountably marooned in a little English country town, and suggests that you come upon it via his AA contemporary Quinlan Terry's Downing College building. The website goes on to poke fun at Cambridge which he says projects the myth of what he calls the 'No 1 slot in the Albion League of Academics', full of Rustic Mechanicals winning Nobel prizes. Outram has a website called Brexit Architecture which is very funny in a similar vein, and also comes up with an insult I wished I'd thought of when describing those new flats outside the Commonwealth Institute.

The last major architect of the 1980s I want to present is in many ways the most difficult for this subject, and that is James Stirling. In the postmodernist *annus mirabilis* of 1980, **Architectural Design** produced a special number on him to celebrate the award of the RIBA's gold medal. Apart from Mark Girouard's biography of him – and I personally would read and enjoy a shopping list if Mark Girouard wrote it – this edition is the still most useful source of information on Stirling in general and even on his yet uncompleted work. In 1980 the Clore Gallery extension to the Tate Gallery had just been given the go-ahead and the state gallery in Stuttgart museum was still under construction. The Berlin science centre is fully illustrated, in Stirling's pink and blue. The only other project that looks identifiably 'postmodern' in the *AD* sense is actually a terrace of houses in Manhattan, by Stirling and his partner Michael Wilford, that wasn't built.

The most striking point to arise from both Stirling's acceptance speech and Mark Girouard's essay here is the emphasis on style. Stirling provided a long stream of historic buildings of different sorts that he liked, and mentioned that as a student he liked what he called the 'stiff' art nouveau of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Josef Hoffman. He said he was

intrigued by the English baroque of Archer, Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh, and he also talked about castles and country houses. He mentions 'stripy brick' Victorian architects including William Butterfield, and Mark Girouard took this up. There was an idea around at the time, which came from Kenneth Clark in the 1920s, that Butterfield's buildings were deliberately, sadistically ugly, and to this Mark says, the more one looks at them, the more one realises that this was not the way Butterfield looked at his buildings at all. He was, Mark continued, 'a very creative architect who could use buildings that were very unlike anything that had gone before'. In this light, Mark says that Stirling's architecture was 'exquisite, reticent, beautifully scaled, delicate, totally inoffensive (in the nasty sense of the word), buildings which really were a pleasure and a delight to look at'. In 1980 Stirling said, when asked why his work had changed so much from his Stirling and Gowan days, 'I do not believe that our work has changed'. This makes sense if you see architecture as being about continuously conjuring with styles, 'transitional', as Terry put it, which is not intended to be pejorative.

Which brings us to **No 1 Poultry**, which the C20 Society has helped to save from mutilation. The building was designed in 1985-1988, but only built, by Michael Wilford & Partners, in 1994-1998, that is, well after Stirling's death in 1992. One of the architects I have been speaking to said that Stirling was a strong editor, and this building wasn't edited. It also carries with it the whole long and unfortunate saga of the Mappin and Webb site demolitions and a high degree of Sainsbury Wing-like acrimony, including the political aspects of it and the accusations that the building is kind of three-dimensional Thatcherism, not least because the Conservative secretary of State Nicholas Ridley gave it permission following the second public enquiry. What was built might perhaps be a kind of advanced concept model rather than a final scheme. Some architects, including Lutyens and Webb, developed their ideas for buildings by lining up historical models in front of them, and maybe this is one of these. But it's clearly a very extraordinary affair, even if like the House of Parliament, it is so different from everything else that it is hard to know what to say about it stylistically. Perhaps you can help me out.

The recent decision to list No 1 Poultry makes this a good place to draw to a conclusion. The Historic England list description called it 'an unsurpassed example of commercial post-modernism, on a monumental scale, intricate in its planning and rigorously scrutinised and executed'. So you have there a formal endorsement of postmodernism.

I'll leave you with four further images. The first of these is an example of how in fact *AD's* version of postmodernism – and the new urbanism that quickly followed it – is more alive than one might think. This is the masterplan and detailed scheme by Porphyrios Associates for the **Bay Campus of the University of Swansea**, some of which has already been built. To some extent this should be part of your lecture on neo-Georgian, because most of the elevations look like the fronts of Georgian terraces, but the grand scale of the plan and also the way in which the architects have illustrated it put it into the family of projects that starts with Dixon Jones. This two-page spread actually comes from the Winter 2016/17 'Detail' supplement produced by the Istock Brick company, and the story is titled 'Tradition and Technology'. There is some significance in this – the success of the gothic revival was due to the fact that it could face technical challenges, from kitchens to railway stations, head on without evasion, and the rediscovery and reinvention of materials that followed it fed into the design itself. That aspect is particularly evident in the work of Short & Associates, which

came to prominence with the design of this: the **Queen's Building** at De Montfort University in Leicester, of 1991-1993, photographed by Peter Cook, and is still is best known for emphasising the technological input of its buildings in the design of its roofs and facades in the Victorian realist manner. In 2008 the practice designed **this gable** at the rear of a building facing Pall Mall, eventually executed by MJP Architects, photographed here by Peter Durant. This façade is what you can see from the courtyard behind Berry Bros; it has been inserted into a project that retains an Edwardian elevation at 62 Pall Mall, but remakes the 1949 elevation to no 63, by the art deco or 'Moderne' architects, Welch and Lander apparently on the basis of research into their original intentions. So while on the one hand it pays some tribute to American postmodernists – the open screen or proscenium motif belongs to Moore and Venturi – it combines a number of essentially English postmodern elements too; it incorporates a transformative remodelling on a tight site, and it also references back to the architecture of its immediate area, as Terry Farrell has done. The article about it in the *Architecture Today* was written by Ian Latham, and I was interested to see that one of his few criticisms was that the new project didn't relate further to the Norman Shaw building next door – which of course would have made it more typical still.

The final image here, and it completes the cycle which started with the Clifton Nurseries' portico, is a lovely very recent building called the **Teddington folly**, by Timothy Smith and Jonathan Taylor, two young architects who teach a design studio at Kingston University. This is a rear extension to a listed Victorian cottage, and although the project is small in plan, it has a grand layout *en filade* which culminates in this garden pavilion-like elevation. It reminds me a little of some of the more imaginative early nineteenth-century parsonages before the gothic revival set in. Now that the garden has grown up a bit, the scene really does have the bucolic setting that its architects wanted to create around it. I'm leaving this up as I think it says quite a bit about some of the future directions that postmodernism, or however you want to call it, will be travelling down in future, as well as some of the places that it has already arrived at and which we don't yet know enough about.